
Imprimatur.

Ra. Barker.

Septemb. 25.

1691.

ΕΛΠΙΣ & ΕΙΡΗΝΗ:

OR,

Hope and Peace:

IN A

LETTER

To a Person

Troubled in Mind.

Who, (though a Vertuous Lady, yet)
laboured under great Scrupulosities, Doubts
and Fears; and some uneasie degrees of
Desperation.

*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job 13. 14.
Cast not away your confidence, which hath great re-
compense of reward,*

*For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done
the will of God, ye might receive the promise,
Heb. 10. 35, 36.*

By a Divine, and sincere Son, of the Church
of England, as by Law Establishd.

L O N D O N,

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2. Letters of Religion & Virtue, to several
Gentlemen & Ladies; with Reflections
on divers Subjects. Lon. 1695.

3. Contemplations on y^e Love of God, with
a Suitable Prayer. Lon. 1699.

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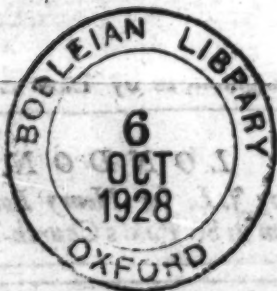
Imprimatur.

K. A. Baker.

Sept. 27.
1891.



London Press



TO THE



Holy, Undivided and Eternal.

TRINITY.

O My Father, my
Redeemer, my
Comforter, my God, my
Love, upon my bended
Knees, and from my
most inflamed Affecti-
ons, I humbly Dedicate
this little Tract to

A 3 thee,

thee, to thy Glory, and
thy Love ; most Passi-
onately, yet in all Hu-
mility, desiring, That
by this, or some other
Offices which thou shalt
choose for me, or employ
me in, I may not only
Glorifie thee, Love thee,
and Obey thee my self,
(which above all things
I desire to do) but may
be a means in thy
Hand, and by thy Di-
vine Designation, that
very

very many of my Christian Brethren may do so too, before I leave Mortality.

I desire and design by this Treatise, (upon which I humbly beg thy Influence, O Blessed Spirit,) that thou mayst be truly feared; and not only fear'd, but lov'd; and not only lov'd, but obey'd; and by being all of them, mayst be glorified; and

my Brethren comforted,
directed, and assisted
here, and may be saved
in the day of the Lord
Jesus. Amen, Amen.

A Pre-
A R

~~will need a better Distance~~
~~than I am able to make~~
~~but I make no question of~~
~~your Pardon, when I have~~
~~Part or Office is not meant~~
~~oned to much to be a Dis~~
~~do to little need it, as to the~~
~~he may~~

A
Prefatory Apology
To all the
MINISTERS
Of the
Church of England.

My dear Brethren and Fathers,

I Am very sensible how
justly you may think,
that my setting Rules, or
giving Directions to any of
you, (as you may think I
do in the Fourth Section)
will

will need a better Defence
than I am able to make.
But I make no question of
your Pardon, when I have
assured you, that the Priest's
Part or Office is not menti-
oned so much to be a Di-
rection to any of you, who
do so little need it, as to the
Penitent ; that he may
plainly see and know, what
he ought to say and do, and
how he may most piously
& devoutly demean himself
in his Penitential Addresses
and Applications to God
and You, when he comes to
beg your Advice, your Con-
duct and your Absolution.

THE

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A

**A
LETTER
TO A
LADY.**

*To the Vertuous and Excellent
Lady, Madam U. P.*

Honoured Madam,

THERE is scarce any
thing so welcome an Im-
ployment to me, as an
Opportunity of doing my
Master's Work, in those In-
stances

A Letter to a Lady

stances wherein I am very like to be successful : And I shall myself receive a great Joy at the rebound, if I may disperse your unreasonable *Fears*, that you may *serve the Lord with gladness*, Psal. 100. 2. and give him a very chearful Obedience (which he so much loves) for the remainder of your Life. Though neither would I give you an unsecure Confidence, and a false Peace.

Madam, I must, by way of Introduction to what follows, request you, for the present, to lay aside the Notion of absolute and irrelative Election and Reprobation ; or the Opinion of the unconditionate Decrees of God, (as 'tis held by the Men of the Presbyterian way) if you have entertained it.

As

Troubled in Mind.

13

As also their Notion of the certainty of Salvation, so as not to look upon it to be a Duty. For (as the Bless'd Bishop * *Taylor* * Life of Christ, Part 3. Sect. 13. N. 5. truly says) to be certainly perswaded of our present Condition is not a Duty : Sometimes it is not possible, and sometimes 'tis better to be otherwise.

But yet when a Person of your great Sanctity of Life has considered what follows, I do not doubt, but you will receive a great Joy, a chearful Hope, an humble Confidence, a pious Serenity and Tranquillity of Mind, and a Religious Peace.

One of the Eight things following (or all of them in Conjunction) will, I hope, procure them ; which I shall not offer to you from my own Head and Hand only : There shall not be very much that shall be my

B 2

own,

own, besides the Methodizing
and Collection of the Particu-
lars: And that too from the
greatest Luminaries of this part
of the Christian Church, whom
you may securely trust; and who
now sit in their Orbs of Glory,
and “shine among their Bre-
“thren Stars, that in their several
“Ages gave Light to the World,
“and turn’d many Souls to
“Righteousness.

I.
First, I shall lay down some
Remedies against any degrees of
Desperation, or an uncomforta-
ble Progress in Religion, and the
Divine Love.

II.

II.

Secondly, Shew what Sins are consistent with a Regenerate Estate, and what those are that are not.

III.

Thirdly, How we may best know that our Repentance is true, and our Sins pardoned.

IV.

If at any time you should find your Conscience Troubled with any weighty matter, and should desire the Absolution of a Wise and Holy Guide of Souls, I shall give you a Form and Method for Holy Confession.

V.

Give you a Remedy against entertaining and cherishing slight and unnecessary Scruples, or against Scrupulosity.

VI.

I shall endeavour to remove the Fears you are sometimes under, lest you should not sufficiently believe there is a God; and under this Head, give you a support for weariness in Temptations.

VII.

That you are not to be displeased with your self if you are sometimes dull and heavy; not to be vexed and angry, because some-

sometimes you do not find those Pleasures in Religious Duties, which you do at other times, or have done formerly.

VIII.

Leave with you two Prayers fitted for Persons Troubled in Mind. One of these Eight Things will (I hope) relieve you.

B 4

(SECT.

SECT. I.

*Remedies against any degrees
of Desperation, or an un-
comfortable Progress in
Religion, and in the Divine
Love.*

1. **N**EVER let us entertain
such evil and jealous
Thoughts of God, as we do of
an angry Man : That he takes
all possible Advantages and Oc-
casions against us to Damn us.
What dishonourable Thoughts
are these of him, whose Wisdom,
and Mercy, and Goodness are
infinite. 'Tis impossible (me-
thinks) did we duly consider
what a wonderful course he
took to save us, what a stupen-
dious

dious Contrivance he laid, to reconcile his Justice with his Mercy to Penitents, by the Death of his Son ; it seems, I say, impossible when these things are considered with a close and piercing Thought, that we should be able to have such suspicions of him ; of him we love, and of him that took such great care that we might be fitted to be loved by him eternally.

2. If God did so much for you before you could beg or ask it, or knew you needed it ; what will he not do for you, when you so passionately beg it, and that too in the endearing Name of Jesus?

3. If God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner ; nay, if there be joy in Heaven at the Conversion of one, why should we our selves

B 5 make.

make a Discord in that Harmony, and not rejoice with them, when we know we desire and resolve to retain no one known sin whatever? 'Twas a great Father of the Church, a great Sinner, and a great Penitent, that said, *Doleat homo Christianus, & de dolore gaudeat*; Let the Christian indeed grieve, but then let him rejoice that he has done so.

4. Pray consider, Madam, since God uses infinite Arts and Instruments to reconcile us to himself; sent his Son to die for us; his Spirit to guide us; his Angels to be our Guardians; his Ministers and Messengers to warn and mind us continually of his love to Mankind; nay, to take us by the Hand and assist us and conduct us up to him: can we think otherwise than that he

he is infinitely willing to have us saved? Now, since certainly he is desirous to save us, as appears by all this; as also we are assured by his Word, by his Oaths, by his very Nature, and Miracles of Mercy; it is not likely that he will condemn us, without great Provocations of his Majesty, and perseverance in them.

5. The Covenant of the Gospel is a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and of Repentance; and seeing 'twas established with so many great Solemnities and Miracles from Heaven, it must signifie a huge and mighty Favour; which it could not be, if every little slip, or frailty, or imperfection, or sin, did put us out of the Covenant: under the Protection of which Covenant many hundreds of Persons are safe, that fear exceedingly.

6. In:

6. In our Baptism we entred into the Condition of Repentance ; and therefore it ought to be certain that no man despair of Pardon, but he that hath voluntarily renounced his Baptism. He that sticks to it and still professes the Religion, and approves the Faith, and endeavours to obey God and to do his Duty, this Person hath all the veracity of God to assure him, and give him confidence, that his Case is very hopeful.

7. Madam, it seems you are afraid of your State. Now pray consider, the more you fear, the more 'tis plain you hate that sin that is the cause of it ; and therefore such fears are good Instruments of *Grace*, and good signs of a future *Pardon*.

8. Your Fears and Tremblings proceed from an eager desire

desire of Grace, and a desire to please God. Now 'tis a certain Rule, That one great sign of Grace is a desire of Grace. So that your very Fears give you a great cause of Joy:

9. Be pleased, Madam, seriously to consider, that God in the Old Law, although he made a Covenant of perfect Obedience, and did not promise Pardon at all after great sins; yet he did give Pardon, and that to the greatest sins and sinners; to *David*, to *Manasses*, to Apostacy and Idolatry. And if so, O what will he please to do under the Gospel, where he hath established the whole sum of Affairs upon *Faith* and *Repentance*, and *sincere* (not perfect) *Obedience*?

10. There is only one sin declared not to be forgiven, *the sin against the Holy Ghost*; which was

was the sin of the Pharisees, who, as our Saviour tells us, Blaphemed the Holy Ghost, in ascribing those great Miracles which they saw him work, and which he really wrought by the Spirit of God, to the Power of the Devil.

Or in other words 'tis thus; By the Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost must be understood, according to the Context, that of imputing the Operation of the Spirit in Miracles to the Devil, which is therefore so heinous, because 'tis an Expression of the greatest Contempt of it, and a Bar against the being perswaded by it.

As for your full Satisfaction in this Particular, 'tis certain no man commits a sin against the Holy Ghost, if he be afraid he hath, and desires that he had not:
for

for such Penitential Passions are against the Definition of that sin.

11. All the Exhortations of Scripture, perswading Men to *Repentance*, to be *afflicted*, and *mourn*; to *Confession of sins* and the like, are most sure Testimonies of God's purpose and desire to forgive us, even when we fall after Baptism.

12. The very Nature and Design of the Gospel supposes *sincerity*, and not *Perfection* here. Madam, it may be you are troubled that you are not *Perfect*; that is, that you are not an Angel, or one of the *Spirits of just Men made Perfect*; which sure 'tis not possible for you to think you should be, while you are cloathed upon with this Body; till the Curtain be drawn aside, and you be admitted to the
bless'd

blest'd Society of the upper World.

13. Madam, I know you are a Person that love God; but still you are afraid that your Faith is not such as it ought to be; or you are troubled that there are difficulties in Religion, whose depths you cannot fathom, and some Objections which you cannot answer; and you have frequently some Doubts and Fears touching your Faith.

But there is no doubt but the * tender Dispositions, and Pliant Natures, and Devotional Tempers of People less knowing than your self, will make up a greater number in Heaven, than the severe, and wary, and enquiring People, who sometimes love because they believe, and believe because they can demonstrate, but never believe because they love.

14. We

* Life of
Christ,
Part 3.
ad Sect. 16.
N. 11.

14. We cannot think or speak good things of God, if we entertain unreasonable Fears, and evil Suspicions of the Mercies of the Father of our Lord Jesus. And he that will not *quench the smoking Flax*, nor *break the bruised Reed*; that is, will not deal Rigidly but Mercifully with those that have fallen; does not tie us to Perfection, and the Laws and Measures of Heaven upon Earth: Or, as I said before, does not require a *Perfect*, but will graciously accept of an *Evangelical and Sincere Obedience*. Madam, I could add more to this Purpose, but I suppose that less than this duly weighed, would bring to a Person of less Sanctity of Life than your self, a *cheerful Obedience*, a *holy Love*, and a *Religious Peace*.

S E C T. II.

*What Sins are consistent with
a Regenerate Estate.*

BUT because some devout Persons, notwithstanding all Considerations of the State of Imperfection here, are apt to estimate their Piety by the Measures of Perfection and the Life of Angels; I am to assure you, that some sins are consistent or compatible with a Regenerate Estate; and they are these:

1. Sins of Infirmary.
2. Of Ignorance, (which may come under the Head of Infirmary.)

See Dr.
Hammonds
Præf. Cat.
Lib. 1.
Sect. 3.

3. Sins of sudden Surreption, or those which we fall into un-awares.

4. Such as by daily Incurſion of Temptations (though conſtantly reſiſted, yet) through the length of the Work, and our frailty, and Satan's vigilance ſometimes are gained from us.

All theſe, where the Repentance cannot well be particular, are by general Repentance (that is, humbling our ſelves before God for them, begging God's Pardon in Chriſt, and labouring againſt them more diligently for the future) reconcilable with a Regenerate Eſtate: theſe are ſpots, but they are ſpots of Sons, though they be never totally overcome in this Life.

5. Nay

S E C T. II.

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1. Sins of Infirmity.
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S E C T.

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ſtate: theſe are ſpots, but they
are ſpots of Sons, though they
be never totally overcome in
this Life.

Nay further, some one wilful Act of deliberate sin, which we might have resisted, if it be presently retracted with Contrition and Confession, and reinforcing of our Resolution and Vigilance against it, and so not favoured or indulged unto, may be also reconcileable with a Regenerate State, so far, as not wholly to quench the Spirit of God, to cause Spiritual Desertion, though it *do* grieve that Spirit, waste the Conscience, wound the Soul, and provoke God's Displeasure (from which nothing but hearty Repentance can deliver us) and commonly bring some Temporal Judgment upon us.

In short, these (and these only) are unreconcilable with a Regenerate State which are not consistent with *an honest Heart,*

or

or sincere endeavour; particularly these two, *Hypocrisy* and *Custom of any sin*. In all which cases I do not question but your Conscience speaks Peace to you.

S E C T. III.

How we may best know that our Repentance is true, and our sins pardoned.

IT being possible that after all your Repentance, your Doubts and Fears are great touching your Pardon; I shall give you a certain Rule by which you may make a Judgment of the truth of your Repentance; and 'tis this:

Because

Bishop
Taylor's
Sermon of
Godly
Fear. p. 76.

Because the worst of Evils, which are threatned to us, are such which consign to Hell by persevering in sin; as God takes off our love and our affections, our Relations and Bondage under sin, just in the same degree he pardons us; because the Punishment of sin being taken off and pardoned, there can remain no Guilt. Guiltiness is an insignificant word, if there be no Obligation to punishment. Since therefore Spiritual Evils and Progressions in sin, and the Spirit of Reprobation and Impenitence, and accursed Habits and perseverance in Iniquity, are the worst of Evils; when they are taken off, the sin hath lost its Venom and appendant Curse. For sin passes on to eternal Death only by the line of Impenitence, and it can never carry us to He-

if we Repent timely and effectually: In the same degree therefore that any Man leaves his sin, just in the same degree he is pardoned, and he is sure of it.

For although curing the Temporal evil was the pardon of sins among the Jews, yet we must reckon our pardon by curing the Spiritual. If I have sinned against God in the shameful Crime of Lust, then God hath pardoned my sins, when, upon my Repentance and Prayers, he hath given me the Grace of Chastity. My drunkenness is forgiven, when I have acquired the Grace of Temperance and a Sober Spirit. My Covetousness shall be no more a damning sin, when I have a loving and charitable Spirit, loving to do good and despising the World: For every
further

further degree of sin being a nearer step to Hell, and by consequence the worst punishment of sin; it follows inevitably, that according as we are put into a contrary state, so are our degrees of Pardon, and the worst punishment is already taken off.

So that the case is plain; just as we leave our sins, so God's Wrath shall be taken from us; as we get the Graces contrary to our former Vices, so infallibly we are consigned to Pardon. If therefore we are in Contestation against sin, while we dwell in difficulty, and sometimes yield to sin, and sometimes overcome it, our Pardon is uncertain, and is not discernable in its Progress; but when sin is mortified, and our lusts are dead, and under the power of Grace, and we are led by

by the Spirit, all our Fears, concerning our State of Pardon, are causeless, and afflictive without reason. And now, Madam, I am very confident, that all this Discourse can speak nothing else to you, but Peace.

SECT. IV.

A Method for Holy Confession.

Madam,

I Am far from pressing this upon you, with Arguments of a necessity for it, as if no Salvation could be obtained without it, as those of the Church of Rome do. But 'tis certain some Pious Persons have found great Consolation, and Serenity, and

C

Tran-

Tranquillity, and Peace of Mind from a *right use of it*: Others there are that would make use of it if they knew how; or, had a Rule and Method for it. And 'tis certain there is a great deal of Piety and Safety in it; and it would leave an unknown Peace, and Joy, and Relief behind it to some Tender and Devout Tempers.

But I shall only give a Rule or Way for doing it, and I do but no means urge it upon you as an absolute and indispensable necessity to Pardon and Salvation.

This only I say, That if ever you should think fit, to unload any weighty burthen of Conscience, to a Prudent and Holy Guide of Souls, and desire Absolution; it may be done as follows.

Supposing then that a day or two before your *Private Penitential Humiliations* in your Closet be over; in a *Fasting-day*, (or part of a day kept for that purpose) when you come into the Church, or Chappel, or Room where you appoint to meet the Minister, you are to *kneel down*, as making your Confession to God more than to *him*.

When you are upon your knees, before your Confession, the Minister will, very likely, pray with you, and for you, in some such short, but excellent Prayers as these:

Minister.

PRevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in

A Letter to a Lady

all our works begun, continued
and ended in thee, we may glo-
rifie thy holy Name, and final-
ly by thy mercy obtain everlast-
ing life, through Jesus Christ
our Lord. *Amen.*

A Lmighty God, unto whom
all hearts be open, all
desires known, and from whom
no secrets are hid; Cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts by the
Inspiration of thy holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love thee,
and worthily magnifie thy holy
Name, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Lmighty and everlasting
God, who hateth nothing
that he hath made, and doth
forgive the sins of all them that
are Penitent, create and make
in you a new and contrite heart,
that

Troubled in Mind.

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that you worthily lamenting
your sins, and acknowledging
your wretchedness, may obtain
of him, the God of all Mercy,
Perfect Remission and Forgive-
ness, through Jesus Christ our
Lord. *Amen.*

GRant, we beseech thee,
merciful Lord, to thy
faithful People, Pardon and
Peace, that they may be cleansed
from all their sins, and serve
thee with a quiet mind,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

C 3

When

A Letter to a Lady

When the Minister has thus, or in like manner, prayed for you, I would advise you, being still upon your knees, to have your Common-Prayer-Book ready, and in it a written Paper, containing a Catalogue or Note of those things that most burthen you, (for I know you can read and write.)

All things being thus prepared, say first this general Confession,

Penitent.

IN the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Almighty

A Lmighty God, Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ,
Maker of all things, Judge of
all Men; I acknowledge and
bewail my manifold sins and
wickedness, which I from time
to time most grievously have
committed, by thought, word
and deed, against thy Divine
Majesty, provoking most justly
thy Wrath and Indignation a-
gainst me. I do earnestly re-
pent, and am heartily sorry
for these my misdoings. The
remembrance of them is grievous
unto me; The burthen of them
is intolerable. Have mercy up-
on me, have mercy upon me,
most merciful Father; for thy
Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive me all that is past; and
grant that I may ever hereafter
serve and please thee in newness

of life, to the honour and glory
of thy Name, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

More particularly, I confess
to Almighty God, and to
you my Ghostly Father, That I
have grievously offended God,
through my fault, my exceeding
great fault, by the sin of * —
but I accuse, and judge, and con-
demn my self; God be merci-
ful to me a sinner.

* Here
mention
the Sin.

Priest.

Amen.

I Confess to Almighty God,
and to you my Ghostly Fa-
ther, That I have *frequently* of-
fended God, through my fault,
my exceeding great fault, by the
Sin of * — but I accuse, I
judge, I shame, I condemn my
self;

Troubled in Mind.

33

self; God be merciful to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

Or if any Person have been at Confession before, then he may speak thus:

I Confess to Almighty God, and to you my Ghostly Father, That [since my last Confession] I have offended God, through my fault, my exceeding great fault, by the Sin of *—— but I accuse, I judge, I condemn my self; God be merciful to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

C 5

When

When the Person after this manner, has mentioned the sins, that most burden and grieve the Conscience, he should sum up all in these or the like words.

OF these, and all tendencies to these, or to any sins whatever ; Of all Receptions from my Baptismal Purity and Innocence, of all the Defects of my Repentances, particularly of this my Confession ; Of all my sinful or irregular Thoughts, Words, or Actions, known or secret ; all my Errors, whether of Faith or Life, [** or Doctrine if you are a Minister.*] All Violations of my Duty to God, myself, or Neighbour, whether of Omission or Commission, whatsoever they are, or wheresoever they are Registered, whether in
my

my own Conscience, or in any Record that may be proved against me in the Day of Judgment ; I accuse, and judge, and shame and condemn my self for them all ; God be merciful to me a sinner.

Priest.

Amen.

And as I am heartily sorry for the Love of God, for having disobeyed a Compassionate Father, a Crucified Master, and grieved the Holy Spirit ; and as I heartily purpose, by Divine assistance, a Life of future Love and Obedience ; so I pant, I sigh, I languish for his Pardoning Mercy, and his Grace, and earnestly beg your Prayers for me, your Absolution.

When

A Letter to a Lady

When you who are the Penitent have in sincerity of heart said this, the Minister (you will find) will Pray for you, and Absolve you in this (or the like) manner following.

Minister.

O Lord, we beseech thee, mercifully hear our Prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee, that they whose Consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be Absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

AL-

ALmighty God our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty Repentance and true Faith, turn unto him; have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then the Minister laying his right hand on your head Absolves you (if he see fit) thus:

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by

by his Authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Priest,

The Collect.

O Most merciful God, who according to the multitude of thy mercies, dost so put away the sins of those who truly repent, that thou rememberest them no more; Open thine eye of mercy upon this thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness. Renew in *him* (most loving Father) whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the Devil, or by *his* own carnal will and frailness; preserve and continue

tinue *him* in the unity of the Church; consider *his* contrition, and accept *his* tears. And forasmuch as he putteth *his* full trust only in thy mercy, impute not to *him* *his* former sins; but strengthen *him* with thy blessed Spirit, and receive *him* into thy favour, through the merits of thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Minister.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Penitent.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Penitent.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Minister.

Lord, hear our Prayer.

Penitent.

And let our cry come unto thee.

Minister.

Minister.

O U R Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

O Lord, I beseech thee, absolve this thy servant from *his* offences, that through thy bountiful goodness *he* may be delivered from the bands of those sins which by *his* frailty *he* has committed; Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

AL

ALmighty and everlast-
ing God, who is always
more ready to hear than we to
pray, and is wont to give more
than either we desire or deserve ;
pour down upon you the abun-
dance of his mercy; forgiving you
those things whereof your Con-
science is afraid, and giving you
those good things which you are
not worthy to ask, but through
the merits and mediationn of Je-
sus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LORD, I beseech, thee
grant this thy servant
grace to withstand the temp-
tations of the World, the Flesh,
and the Devil, and with a pure
heart and mind to follow thee
the only God, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Al-

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctifie, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments, that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

THE Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you Peace, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

Although

Although this, Madam, would be a good Method for Holy Confession, and such as I my self have made use of; and have found, by my own experience, the result of it to be this: That it leaves Peace, and Joy, and a great Tranquillity of Mind behind it; and to be a wonderful incouragement to a good life: yet I must again say, I do not urge it upon you, as if it were of such moment, that Salvation could not be attained without it; (for I doubt not, but that the business may be acceptably transacted between God and the Soul alone) but I mention these Directions, if ever you should think fit to try what that Peace and Joy, that sedate and comfortable frame of Soul is, which it would leave behind it.

S E C T.

SECT. V.

A Remedy against entertaining and cherishing slight and unnecessary Scruples ; or, against Scrupulosity.

TIS very possible, Madam, that a Person of your Tenderness of Conscience may (and I believe you sometimes do) give way to some needless Scruples, whereby they are apt exceedingly to increase upon you.

If this be your case, then be pleased to consider these express words of the most Judicious Bishop * Sanderson.

* Bishop
Sandersons
Judgment
in one
View,
p. 166.

What

‘What is to be done (says
 he) ‘when the Conscience is
 ‘*Scrupulous*? I call that a *Scru-*
 ‘*ple*, when a Man is reasonably
 ‘well perswaded of the *lawful-*
 ‘*ness of a thing*, yet hath withal
 ‘some jealousies and fears lest
 ‘perhaps it should prove *unlaw-*
 ‘*ful*.

‘Such Scruples are most inci-
 ‘dent to Men of Melancholy
 ‘Dispositions, or of Timorous
 ‘Spirits; espically if they be
 ‘tender Conscienced withal; and
 ‘they are much increased by false
 ‘Suggestions of Satan, by read-
 ‘ing the Books, or hearing the Ser-
 ‘mons, or frequenting the com-
 ‘pany of Men more strict, pre-
 ‘cise, and austere in fundry
 ‘Points, than they need or ought
 ‘to be; and by fundry other
 ‘means which I now mention
 ‘not.

‘Of

‘Of which Scruples it be-
‘hooveth every Man, *First*, to
‘be very wary that he do not
‘all admit them, if he can chuse
‘or if he cannot wholly avoi-
‘them, that, *Secondly*, he ende-
‘avour, so far as may be, to
‘ject them speedily out of his
‘thoughts, as Satan’s snares, and
‘things that may breed him
‘worser inconveniencies : Or
‘he cannot be so rid of them
‘then, *Thirdly*, he resolves to go
‘on according to the more pro-
‘fitable Perswasion of his Mind
‘and dispise those Scruples. And
‘this he may do with a good
‘Conscience, not only in things
‘commanded him by lawful Au-
‘thority, but even in things
‘different and arbitrary, and
‘wherein he is left to his own
‘liberty.

The

These are the very words of that excellent Prelate.

Sometimes, it seems, your Doubts and Scruples are of another sort. You find so many Religions, or rather Differences of Opinion about Religion, in the World, and especially in this our Kingdom, that you sometimes waver; and do not only doubt whether it be best to continue a Member of this excellent Church in which you received your Baptism; but if you should desert us, you know not where to fix.

Madam, in answer to this, * I'll tell you a Religion that all the World shall agree in, and my Soul for yours, you shall be safe if you will comply with it. It is no more but this: Live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World: Or if you will

* Second
Winter-E.
vening
Confe-
rence, p.
211. By
Dr. Good-
man.

will have it in other words, resolve with your self not to do that thing, whatever come of it, that you cannot answer to God, and your own Conscience; and do every thing within your power, that may approve and recommend you to both; and thenceforward fear not a day of Judgment. - And for doing this, you have as great advantages in your Mother Church, as you will meet with any where in the World beside.

There is besides, a sort of Scrupulous Divinity, which, I have some reason to believe, has been apt to hinder your Tranquillity of Mind, and brought you some Disquiet.

* *Id. ib.*
p. 214.

* It is asserted by some Casuists, That in things certain and indisputable, it is a Man's duty to do that which is best of the kind;

kind ; and in uncertain and controverted cases, to take the surer side.

Now if these things were laid down as prudential Advices only, to direct a Man which way to incline himself, they were very useful ; but to make them express measures of Duty, is to make more Laws than God hath made, and condemn more things for sin, than he condemns ; and therefore must needs imbroil the Consciences of Men. For, suppose Prayer be better than Secular business, then upon this Principle I must turn *Euchite*, and spend all my time in Devotion. Suppose there be fewer Temptations in a Monastick Life than in common Conversation, then every one that is careful of his Soul, must retire into a Cloyster. If there be difficul-

D

ties

A Letter to a Lady

ties attending Magistracy and publick Imployment, then I must fold up my Arms, and do nothing but go into my Cell, and pray God to mend the World, though I am call'd to the other: If bodily Exercises and Games have some Snares in them, I must allow my self no Recreations; nay, I shall be put endlessly and anxiously to dispute, whether it be better to give a poor Man two-pence, or a shilling, or five shillings, &c. Whether I shall pray three times a day, or seven times a day; whether an hour, or two hours. And indeed every thing I go about, will afford inextricable difficulties, upon these Principles——Trouble your self no further than to live every day well, and to be sure to do nothing you cannot answer; be
always

always getting ground, and growing better and better; as near as you can, do every day something that may turn to Account another day; and then comfortably await God's time.

But possibly your Scruples, and Doubts, and Fears arise from other Grounds.

Some honest and well meaning, but timorous, Persons, not thinking it sufficient for their security, that neither the Law of Nature, nor any express Divine or Humane Law disallow their Actions, are afraid of their own Shadows, and suspect sin and danger, they know not why nor whence. Now would such Persons be induced to consider, that *lawful* and *unlawful* are Relative Terms, and respect some definite Rule or other, which must determine any

Dr. Goodman's Penitent Pardoned, p. 50.

Action to be this or that; that God is well pleased that his Laws be observed, and is not so severe and rigid as to oblige us negatively; that is, that we shall do nothing but what he commands; that there is a great Field of Liberty between express Sin and express Duty, and in that we may walk without offence; that all Actions are good within that scope, and though some may be much better than others, yet none are evil that touch not upon the bounds and limits of Law: If, I say, these things were considered, these honest Minds would be undeceived.

If none of the foregoing Considerations will abate your Scrupulosity, then I would, by all means, advise you, to make known your Doubts and Fears,

to some Judicious, Discreet and Devout Minister of Religion. But here, I know, new Doubts will start up, Madam, whether you may safely acquiesce in his Judgment and Determination? Whether he do not speak for Favour and Affection, and whether the Case and State of your Soul be not worse than he takes it to be? And you'll always fear he is mistaken. But supposing he be a Person so qualified as I have mentioned; then take the words of Bishop *Taylor*, and that Seraphick Prelate will tell you, That you not only *may*, but *ought* to acquiesce in his Determination. — 'He that is

Taylor.
Dust. dub.
B. 1. Ch.
6. Rol. 3.

'troubled with Scruples, *ought* to rely upon the Judgment of a Prudent Guide.

H. Duß.
sub, Book
I. Ch. 4.
Rul. 15.

‘ And that the Sentence and
 ‘ Arbitrament of a Prudent and
 ‘ Good Man, though it be of it
 ‘ self but probable, yet is more
 ‘ than a probable warranty to
 ‘ Actions otherwise undetermi-
 ‘ nable.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

The business of my Sixth Head shall be to remove the Fears you are sometimes under, lest you should not sufficiently believe there is a God. And under this Head, to give you a Support for weariness in Temptations.

Madam,

YOU do sometimes tell me, That you do not know whether there be a God, and that you are in the dark about it.

B 4

But,

But, I am sure, you do most firmly *believe it* : and that's enough in this your present State and Condition. I know you keep most strictly and constantly to your Duties ; which shews that you cannot possibly doubt of the being of a God. You plainly shew your Faith (the truth of which you sometimes doubt of) by your Obedience, which is the best way of shewing it in the whole World:

Ay, but how glad should you be (say you) could you have but one glimpse of him here in this life ? and a Revelation (though but for a little time) of his Glories.

Madam, for many reasons 'tis not fit we should desire it ; nay, 'tis best for us we should be without it here. This would destroy one great Duty of our Religion,

Religion, which is *Faith*. For it would be no longer *Faith* then, but *Vision*, or *Beholding*: and how should we then be crowned or rewarded for our believing, when we could not possibly chuse but believe? How is it possible we could have any Title to that Blessing which our Saviour speaks of? *Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed*, St. John 20. 29.

And would you willingly lose the Rewards of your Faith? Would you willingly be no longer a Believer? For 'tis certain you would then no longer be a *Believer*, but a *Beholder*, should God manifest his Glories to you here in this Life.

To behold him will be one great part of our Reward in the other World: But this you

D 5 would

would willingly have here :
that is, you would willingly
have your Reward before you
have done your Work. You
would be recompensed long
before your Day be over.
You would willingly be admit-
ted to *enjoyment* before God sees
that you have been long enough
a *Believer*.

A firm Believer I know you
are, (as I before told you) by
the constancy of your Obedi-
ence. You believe firmly there
is a God: for otherwise who
should make the first Man?
'Tis certain nothing can produce
it self. You cannot possibly
think that the first Bullock,
Horse, or Sheep that ever
was, could arise out of the
Earth; for if it were so hereto-
fore at any time, why do we
not sometimes see it to be so
now?

now? The first *Man*, (I say) the first *Beast*, the first *Fowl* of the *Air*; none of these surely could produce themselves, or rise out of the *Earth* by chance; for if they did formerly, 'tis certain they would do so still; and we should see or hear of it daily. But because 'tis certain that no *Man* ever did see, or hear of, or believe such a thing; 'tis very plain and evident, they must be produced by an Infinite Power.

You do plainly find that it can never be any *Humane Art* or *Power* that carries about the *Sun* so exactly, that it has not varied one *Minute* in its *Course* since you can remember, or in many hundred *Years* before. When you see a *Clock* or *Watch*, though you never saw the *Maker* of it, yet can you ever think that it made it self, or that

that it came so together by chance? or that it should move so orderly without some Hand to frame and set it? You know, that all the World could not perswade you to believe such a thing.

And 'tis altogether as impossible you should doubt, whether the Fabrick of the World, and the Motion of the Sun (as well as Moon and Stars) were at first made, and be now guided by an unerring Hand.

Madam, I must tell you, That your very Fears, lest you do not sufficiently believe there is a God, are a plain sign that you do firmly believe him to be. For these Fears proceed from an awful regard of him. 'Tis that awful regard of him that makes you afraid to offend him, by not sufficiently believing.

In

In short, do you believe now there is a God? I know that you believe it: For, as I have twice before observed to you, you shew the firmness of your Faith by the constancy of your Obedience. To desire a glimpse of him, or some manifestation of him here, or to see him, is neither safe nor fit for you. For then you would not only lose the Reward of a Believer, and the Crown of Faith, but 'tis what you cannot bear in this imperfect State. *There shall no man see me and live,* says God, *Exod. 23. 20.* 'Tis to anticipate the Joys of Heaven. 'Tis to expect your Wages when you should be doing your Work. I mean, 'tis to expect the reward of enjoying, while you should be doing the Work of Faith, and believing.

Be

Be content, Madam, to stay a little longer for a clearer Revelation of his Beauty and his Glory. When God has try'd your Faith by your Obedience a little longer, he will suddenly draw aside the Curtain, and let you into the clearer sight of him. But in the mean time, 'tis altogether fit you should (as you do) live in Faith as well as Hope; for as Hope is destroyed by enjoyment, so is Faith by Vision or Beholding. Till therefore you see him face to face, you ought to be alway willing to have your Faith exercised; that so the more 'tis exercised here, the greater its Rewards may be in the Mansions of Glory.

I will

I will conclude this Head, by sub-joining the words of an excellent Author——In the case of Religion and a future State, if irresistible evidence were to be had, there would be no room for Verrue ; it would then be a necessary Action to believe, and no instance of choice, nor any Argument of a vertuous Mind: For what can be the praise or rewardableness of doing that which a Man cannot chuse but do? or what excellency is there in Faith, when there is no pretence in the World for unbelief?

Winter-
Evening-
Confe-
rence, p.
159. By
Dr. Good-
man.

And as it is with *Faith*, or your *Belief* of a God ; just so I find it to be with reference to your Obedience. As you would have no pretence in the World for unbelief ; so you would willingly be without all Temp-
tations

tations to disobedience: That is, you would have your Faith no longer exercised, and your Obedience and Divine Love never tried. But, as I have before demonstrated to you, that 'tis at present better for you to *believe* than to *behold*; so in the case of Obedience, 'tis better for you, that you be sometimes tempted, or that there should be some difficulty in resisting a Temptation, than it would be if there were none. Which you will most plainly see by what follows.

Bishop
Taylor's
Sermon
upon *Psal.*
86. 5.

That we must work out our Spiritual Interest with the labours of our Spirit, seems, to most Men, to be so intolerable, that rather than pass under it, they quit their hopes of Heaven, and pass into the Portion of Devils.

And

And you may possibly complain thus : What can there be to alleviate this sorrow, that a Man shall be perpetually solicited with an impure Tempter, and shall carry a flame within him, and every thing brings Fuel to the Flame ; and full Tables are a snare, and empty Tables are collateral servants to a Lust, and help to blow the Fire, and kindle the heat of prepared Temptations ; and yet a Man must not at all taste of the forbidden Fruit ; and he must not desire what he cannot chuse but desire, and he must not enjoy whatsoever he does violently covet, and must never satisfy his Appetite in the most violent importunities ; but must therefore deny himself, because to do so is extreamly troublesome. This seems to be an
Art

Art of Torture, and a Device to punish Man with the Spirit of Agony, and a restless Vexation.

But this also hath in it a great ingredient of Mercy, or rather is nothing else but a heap of Mercy in its intire Constitution. For if it were not for this, we had nothing of our own to present to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of Heaven, but either all Men or no Man must go thither; for nothing can distinguish Man from Man in order to Beatitude, but Choice and Election, and nothing can ennoble the Choice but Love, and nothing can exercise Love but Difficulty, and nothing can make that difficulty but the Contradiction of our Appetite, and the crossing of our natural Affections.

And

And therefore, whenever any of you are tempted violently, or grow weary in your Spirits, with resisting the petulancy of Temptation, you may be cured, if you will please but to remember and rejoice, that now you have something of your own to give to God, something that he will be pleased to accept, something that he hath given thee that thou mayst give it him: for our Money, our Time, our days of Fasting, and our days of Sorrow, our Discourse, and our Acts of Praise, our Prayers, our Vows, our Offerings, our Worshippings and Prostrations, and whatsoever else can be accounted in the sum of our Religion, are only accepted according as they bear along with them Portions of our Will and Choice of Love,

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Love, and appendent difficulty.

Latius est quoties magno tibi constat honestum; that is, the more there is of self-denial in a Vertuous Action, the greater is the evidence of Grace and Divine Love in the performing it. So that whoever can complain that he serves God with Pains and Mortifications, he is troubled because there is a distinction of things, such as we call Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment.



S E C T. VII.

You are not to be displeased with your self, if you are sometimes dull and heavy; nor to be vexed and angry, because sometimes you do not find those Pleasures in Religious Duties, which you do at other times, or have done formerly.

IN your melancholy Moods, when you are dull and heavy, and find that you are able to do little or nothing in your Religious Duties as you would; I find you are extremely troubled, and apt to be afraid

fraid that these are evidences of God's Wrath, and tokens of your being consigned to the sorrows of eternity; or (as you sometimes speak) that your day of Grace is past, although you still keep to your Religious Duties, and live in no one known Sin or Iniquity.

But let me beseech you, Madam, to be so far from thinking thus, as by no means to think the worse of yourself, for this cold heaviness and lumpishness that will sometimes seize us.

Bishop
Patrick's
Advice to
a Friend,
Chap. 16.

Instead of vexing thoughts for these things, you must consider that our Bodies, being a part of this World, will be liable to those changes which are in things adjacent to them; as in the very temperature of the Air, the Weather, and the like. And that

that your Soul, being united to your Body, cannot but feel its changes, just as when the House smoaks, the Inhabitant is offended, unless he can step out of doors.

Besides, it may be God does very seldom see those sensible joys which you formerly had in Religion, to be now so fit for you: And if he do not see them fit for you, 'tis not fit you should desire them. Think how unworthy the best of us is, alway to live under the Sunbeams; and there are very many Souls who are in a colder Case than yours, and more remote from the Sun of Righteousness, whose Condition is safe, and shall be happy.

But however, think that after you have done what you can, it is the Will of God, that you should

should be as you are ; and if this please him, it need not displease you. Probably, at this Age, God Almighty sees that your Nature cannot bear always such extraordinary Motions as you have had heretofore. Or, it may be, he will not let you feel those sensible Joys you have formerly had, merely to break your Self-Love, which desires nothing but Pleasure in every thing that we do. It may be, 'tis to try whether we will Love him for himself, without those delicate Entertainments, which we have sometimes felt in our Religious Duty : Or for some other Cause unknown to you, and me, and every Body else.

'Tis very possible, that there may be sometimes too much of Self-Love in our vehement desires after the extraordinary Pleasures

sures and Joys of Piety : and that, if we could be content (after we had used due diligence) with our driness and want of vigour, our dulness and barrenness of Spirit ; nay, with our frailties and faults too, meerly out of submission to God, and because he thinks not fit to give us the pleasure of being wholly without them, it would be highly acceptable to him, and no less advantageous to us.

This is not to teach any remissness in your desires and endeavours, but it supposes you do your best ; and only advises you, that, if notwithstanding you cannot be as you would, you do not let your Spirit fall into any impatience and fretfulness. For this is to

E prefer

prefer God's Pleasure above your own.

To be pleased in our successes is not so pleasing to God, as to be patient in our Contests. Nay, to rejoice and triumph in our Victories, is nothing so good, as to be constant, and resolved, notwithstanding that we are a little overcome. In these Spiritual Consolations which we thirst after, we do not always receive so much Profit as we do Pleasure; but in the want of them, if our Wills be thereby more perfectly subdued to his, we receive both a very great Benefit, and in the issue no small pleasure.

You have seen perhaps, or you may imagine, the smoak of a Potter's Furnace; how thick and black it is, as if it would
make

make a Picture of Hell it self. Who would think that the Vessels of Clay which are baked there, would not be burnt to Ashes by the fury of the Fire? or that at least they would come out as black as Soot by the foulness of the Smoak? And yet, when the Fire is put out, and the Vessels unfurnaced, you see there is no such thing: but that which was soft and yielding is become hard and strong; and its Complexion likewise is so much mended, that a Prince need not disdain the use of some of these Cups. Just thus it is with a distressed Soul, when it is covered with a Cloud, and wrapt in darkness; and burns thereby in a great and sore displeasure against it self. It is apt to think, that this sure is the Gate of Hell;

that it is forsaken of God, and shall either perish in this Condition, or not escape out of it, without much loss. But after a while, when the Work of God is done, and the Vapours are vanished and disappear, it finds it self to be grown much in firmness, purity, and splendor; and that it is made a Vessel of Honour, fit for the Master's use. There is no loss of any thing but of its self-will. Nothing is consumed but its softness and delicacy; which made it loth to be toucht.

However, there is no reason for such Conclusions as those, which good Minds have been apt to make in a gloomy day; that if God loved them, he would not treat them after that manner. There is great reason, considering what hath been said,

said, to be not only patient, but thankful to him in such a Condition.

Madam, while I know you to be a Person of great Vertue, allowing your self in no one known sin, or in the neglect of no one known Duty ; and that none of the Riches, Honours, or Pleasures of sin can deceive you ; and that it is too late for them now to put a Cheat upon one, whose Senses are so well exercised to discern between good and evil ; while I know you to be such, I shall subjoin, That you may be abused, it is possible, with fears and jealousies of your self ; and be cast down when you have no list to do any thing that is good, or when you mistake, or have committed a little fault : but be sure you hold fast an unmovable

belief of the goodness of God to you. He doth not expect Children without all faults, and you may be sure cannot be unwilling to pardon them, when he knows that's the way to encourage them to grow better. There is no reason in the World, to suspect his sincerity, when he tells us, *That he desires not the death of a sinner* : O come my Soul say, when he says he has no pleasure in our Death, Shall we say he has ? Shall we think he has ? As little should we imagine that he secretly undermines us, while he openly professes love and friendship to us ; or to fear that he intends to make us the Tokens and Marks of his meer Power and Greatness. Believe this, and it will never let you despond in the worst Condition.

The top and perfection of that Holy Religion which Christ has taught us is Love and Charity; and that is both a Bountiful, and a Meek, and a Patient Vertue: 'Tis alway (you know) shewn in *giving* and *forgiving*. And how is it possible you should believe that he who has *given* you so much as he has, out of his meer Goodness and Love, should be unwilling to *forgive* you nothing? That he who has *given* you so much, with reference to this Life and that to come, before you asked it, should be unwilling to forgive you any thing who do so earnestly ask it; nay, and do perform that very Condition upon which he promised to forgive you; I mean a *Devout Repentance*.

But if, as I said, Charity be the top of our Religion, if it *suffers long and is kind*, if it bears all things, and endures all things; how is it possible, do you think, that God should give us that which is not in himself? or that he should command us to accomplish our Souls with that Perfection, which is not eminent in his own most excellent Nature? We are sure that our loving-kindness is but a weak Imitation of his. And therefore may conclude, that he will have Patience with us, and not be easily provoked, but bear with our Infirmities, and be exceeding kind in bestowing his Blessings, and Pardoning our Offences, and delight in doing both; because there is nothing he so much delights to see
in

in us, as this Image of his loving-kindness.

Assure your self, it is impossible that he should be out-done by us, or that we should equal him in Tenderness and Compassion ; of which he hath given us such a glorious Instance, in the Son of his Love, Christ Jesus, that we should be very unjust, as well as ungrateful and unkind, if we should not expect more from him, than we would do from the best Friend in the World.

So that you ought to be confident, whatsoever defects you find in your self, that *he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of our Lord Jesus.* It is but handsome and becoming, that you should have this Opinion of him. Judge by your self and your own good In-

clinations, whether you ought not to have such high thoughts of Infinite Love. You owe to him all the good you have ; and there is more reason, that he should perfect his own work, than there was that he should begin it.

I shall conclude this Section with this most earnest Advice, That in your most gloomy days, you commit your self to him, in assured hope of his continued Love to you. Be verily perswaded, that he loves you infinitely more, than you love him ; and therefore is more desirous than you can be, to see you do well, and continue in well doing to the end. Who but he is it that hath hitherto enabled you in your study to live Vertuously, and please him ? What should now move him to alter his

his mind, after such numerous Tokens of his Love? What is it should make him hate us? Will he bear with no weakneses? or shall a fault that we have committed, wholly alienate his Affection from us? If when we lay in our filthiness he took pity on us, pulled us out of the Mire, and laid us in his Bosom; now that we are washed all over, will he shake us off, and cast us out of his Imbraces, because our Feet (as our Lord speaks) still need some washing? Never entertain such a Thought of him, as though he was willing to desert you, and cast you out of his Friendship, now that he hath done so much for you, and you have been so long acquainted. By no means hearken to any jealous thoughts, that are but whispered of his
Good-

Goodness, whatsoever the jealousies be, which you have of your own inconstancy.

And let me advise you to be well satisfied, and well pleased, in the doing of what you ought, though it prove not so delightful to you as you desire; remembering, that if you do your Duty as constantly now, when you feel not these sweet and sensible Joys, as you did when you had them; they are the more acceptable to God for this. Because *now* there is more of your choice and your will in them, than there was *then*; when you break through all Difficulties, and will not suffer your self to be over-born by the great load that lies upon your Spirits.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

*Two Prayers for Persons
Troubled in Mind.*

Madam,

I Shall leave the Use or Omission of these to your own Judgment, according as your Needs or Devotions shall incline you.

First Prayer.

O Blessed Lord, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, look down, I beseech thee, in pity and compassion upon me thy afflicted Servant. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess
my

my former iniquities; thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and my Soul is full of trouble: But O merciful God, who hast written thy Holy Word for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of thy Holy Scriptures, might have hope; give me a right understanding of my self, and of thy threats and promises, that I may neither cast away my confidence in thee, nor place it any where but in thee. Give me strength against all my Temptations, and heal all my Distempers. Break not the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. Shut not up thy tender mercies in displeasure; but make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Deliver me from fear of the Enemy, and lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me, and
give

Give me peace, through the merits
and mediation of Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Second Prayer.

O Holy and Eternal God, who
art the glorious Object of
my hopes, and fears, and desires,
and loves; look down, I humbly
beseech thee, in mercy upon the Soul
that thou knowest loves thee; but
yet is troubled that it cannot love
thee more. Dearest Lord, if my
Faith or my Repentance, if my
love of thee, or my obedience to
thee, if my desires to please thee
in all things, do not yet fit me to
be loved by thee; O be pleased
speedily to make them such, or to
pardon their defects, and to accept
them as the best I can at present per-
form, for the Merits and Satis-
faction

faction of Jesus thy beloved in whom thou art well pleased. O sanctifie and increase my Faith, that it may arise up to the confidence of hope, and to as much peace, and as many sensible joys, as thou seeest fit for me in this vale of Tears.

I know, Lord, that thy ways are past finding out; and that thou hast built our Faith upon thy Promises, and our Hopes upon thy Goodness; and hast described our Paths between the Waters of Comfort, and the dry Barren Land of our own Duties and Affections.

I acknowledge that all my Comforts derive from thee, and to myself I owe all my Shame and Confusion, and degrees of Dissatisfaction. But O thou whom my Soul loves, give me, I beseech thee, those Comforts and Visitation
ons

ons of the Holy Ghost, which thou, in thy Infinite and Eternal Wisdom, knowest most apt and expedient to encourage my Duties; to entertain my Hopes; to alleviate my Sadnesses; to refresh my Spirits; and to encourage my Progress and constant Endeavours in the strictnesses of Religion and Sanctity. O my Jesu, make me content, and very well pleased, to be without those Joys which thou dost not yet see fit for me. Make me content to stay for them a little longer. O make me content to stay for the Revelation of the Interior Beauties of thy Kingdom, till I shall be fitted and able to bear it, as well as to enjoy it for Eternity.

In the mean time, dearest Lord, lead me from Grace to Grace; from Imperfection to Strength; from Acts to Habits; from Habits

bits to Confirmation in Grace; that I may pass into the Regions of Comfort; receiving the earnest of the Spirit, and the Adoption of a Child; that between the Vicissitudes and Changes, of Hopes and Fears; Doubts and Joys; Comforts and Sorrows, my passage home to thee may be Safe and Holy: where all my Doubts, and Fears, and Scruples, and Dissatisfactions shall be removed once for all; where all Sin, and Misery, and Danger, and Imperfection, shall be done away for all Ages. Hear me and relieve me, O Holy and Eternal God, for the sake of Jesus thy beloved. Amen, Amen.

Madam,

Madam, all that I shall add shall be my Prayers, that some, or one, or all of these Eight Things, or as many of them as you shall, in your devout Retirements, consider and make use of, may be effectual, and turn your Scruples into Devotion; your Fears into Divine Love; and all your Doubts and Dissatisfactions into a Holy Joy; a chearful Obedience; a great Tranquillity of Mind; a sedate frame of Soul, and a Religious Peace; that in the Words of the Bless'd Apostle (*Rom. 12. 12.*) you may all along *rejoice in hope*, till your hope be swallowed up in Fruition, and all your Scruples of Conscience be for ever answered, and you expire into the Element of Love for all Futurity.

If

92 *A Letter to a Lady, &c.*

If you please to put me into
your Litanies, you will do a great
Office of Charity for him who
desires that, and to be believed to
be,

Madam,

April
1691.

Your Faithfully devoted Servant

in our Lord Jesus.



FINIS.

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